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Media Contact: Oscar Raúl López
Phone: 646-246-7396
Email: info@latinoaidsagenda.org



\$126 MILLION NEEDED IN EMERGENCY FUNDING FOR AIDS DRUG ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

WASHINGTON DC, February 16, 2010 – The National Latino AIDS Action Network (NLAAN) calls on President Obama and Congress to provide an additional \$126 million in FY2010 emergency funding to meet current AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) needs. This amount is in addition to the \$20 million increase allocated for ADAPs included in President Obama’s recently released FY2011 proposed budget.

ADAPs across the country are collapsing under the burden of new participants who enroll due to escalating unemployment and loss of health care insurance benefits. Many of the programs serve as the last hope for low income individuals who need access to life saving and life-sustaining medications. To date eleven ADAPs have already closed their doors to new clients and an additional thirteen other states have instituted or anticipate instituting cost-containment measures such as reducing their eligibility level, cutting drugs from their formulary, instituting annual expenditure caps per client or capping enrollment. As of February 5, 2010, there were 472 individuals on ADAP waiting lists in Arkansas, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah and Wyoming.

During FY2009, ADAPs experienced an average monthly growth of 1,271 clients. This is an unprecedented increase of 80 percent from FY2008 when ADAPs experienced an average monthly growth of 706 clients. ADAPs are supposed to be the safety net under other public programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid, but where are people supposed to turn for help accessing HIV treatments if ADAPs buckle under the financial crisis. The Administration and Congress must act now to save lives.

About NLAAN: The *National Latino Hispanic AIDS Action Network* (NLAAN) was developed in response to the HIV/AIDS crisis within Latino communities and is a participatory and collaborative network of concerned Latinos, community leaders, health and service providers, advocates and representatives of state and local health departments. NLAAN identifies and prioritizes the key needs of Latinos in the United States and its territories regarding HIV/AIDS care and prevention, sets specific federal policy recommendations, mobilizes Latino leadership and increases access to services and resources.

NLAAN
24 West 25th – 9th Floor
New York, NY 10010
www.latinoaidsagenda.org